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View of Soviet Civil Defense Disputed

By Walter Pincus

Washington Post Staff Writer

Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis.) charged yesterday that reports of a massive and highly effective Soviet civil defense program were "largely the making of a mere handful of U.S. defense analysts" and "have no connection with the findings of the intelligence community."

Rather than embarking "upon a very expensive civil defense program to match misleading perceptions of the Soviet effort," Aspin suggested in a study released yesterday that the Carter administration "broadcast loudly and clearly that Soviet civil defense expenditures could not remotely alter the strategic balance."

Even before the 35-page Aspin report on Soviet civil defense was released, the White House apparently was adopting at least part of its advice.

Informed sources disclosed that President Carter last week cut to \$115 million the proposed fiscal 1980 budget request for civil defense activities. That was \$25 million below what Defense Secretary Harold Brown had requested and far below what civil defense advocates had wanted.

Aspin acknowledged that the Soviets "do have a fairly substantial civil defense program. They spend more and make more preparations than does the United States."

But in an item-by-item analysis, he attempted to refute the idea that the Soviet program had in any way effectively neutralized the U.S. strategic deterrent.

Civil defense advocates have said the Soviets spend \$2 billion a year on their program. Aspin called the figure "misleading." He said the figure is based on what "it would cost the United States to duplicate the program" and assumes that Soviet personnel, who make up almost half the costs, are paid \$12,000 to \$18,000 a year when "in fact they are paid rather meagerly."

The Soviets are said to have compulsory civil defense instruction. Aspin



REP. LES ASPIN

disagrees with U.S. defense analysts

found that there is "widespread and acknowledged [Soviet] apathy and skepticism about nuclear war survival, and practical instruction is limited."

He quoted CIA Director Stansfield Turner as saying he saw "little evidence today of serious efforts at mass indoctrination of the [Soviet] population."

Civil defense supporters say the Soviets could evacuate their cities. Aspin said that although there have been "small exercises" at individual factories, "there is absolutely no evidence that the Soviets have carried out massive evacuation drills."

With the Soviet transportation capacity so limited, Aspin said, the assumption is "that 20 million evacuees will have to walk" some 30 miles in one day, then construct "expedient

shelters' in another day or two." Aspin added, "There is no evidence that sufficient supplies are available" to build such shelters.

The Soviets are said to have dispersed their industry. Aspin found "some dispersal has taken place" but that "new and large industrial facilities and power plants continue to be constructed in the major cities."

He cited economic studies to show that "virtually every sector of the Soviet economy is highly concentrated and the great bulk of its productive capacity is located in the large urban centers."

"The [Soviet] economy is highly vulnerable to an attack employing even a relatively small number of nuclear warheads," he concluded.

Aspin cited retired major general George Keegan, former head of Air Force intelligence, as "one of the main instigators of the current worries over Soviet civil defense."

He quoted Keegan as saying he believed "because of the civil defense measures in the U.S.S.R." the United States is incapable of carrying out its assigned wartime retaliatory tasks.

Aspin responded that despite Soviet efforts, "American deterrent capability is sound and secure and that any Soviet efforts to improve and implement their civil defense plans could be readily countered by our existing retaliatory arsenal."

As one example, he said that even if the top Soviet leadership went into deep and hardened bunkers, "one cruise missile would destroy with virtual certainty any point target, no matter how hardened."

As for industrial targets, Aspin said the Moscow area contains 11 other industrial cities with populations exceeding 100,000. All, according to Aspin, would be "vulnerable to the footprint" of a single MIRV missile. A MIRV (Multiple Independently targeted Reentry Vehicle) missile has more than one targetable warhead. Its "footprint" is the area covered by the warheads on one missile.

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